

From: chris@micro-mania.net@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 9:33am
Subject: MicroSoft Settlement Offer

I have read about the Microsoft settlement to provide hardware and software to the nation's poorest schools. I must say that while this offer has a certain appeal, it really does little to get at the heart of the matter, the monopolistic nature of Microsoft. In fact, I do believe that accepting the offer as it was given would only further entrench the operating system and would in fact further reduce competition in the marketplace. As a person who has been involved in education my entire life and who is currently in a high tech university environment, it has been clear to me that providing software to schools at any level has marketing as its main purpose. Allowing a large chunk of the settlement to be encompassed by Microsoft software would be little different than allowing a large part to include simple advertising.

I must say that the base notion has some favorable aspects. The settlement should only include the hardware donations, not the software. This accounting would increase the number of computers contributed from 200,000 to 1,000,000 (14 to 70 systems per school). I also believe that some linkage should be made relative to the Red Hat company's offer to provide free software (with no time limit) to these same schools. Providing an alternative to the Microsoft system to a significant portion of our young people should help increase market competition and as such, the future innovation of America's software. The computer hardware should, in other words, not include devices that were designed in such a manner to exclude non-Microsoft products.

Thank-you for your time,

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